DNREC offers new flood planning tool for determining risk for home and business development projects

Interactive website also helps on gathering information for insurance

DOVER – DNREC's Division of Watershed Stewardship's Shoreline & Waterway Management Section now offers an interactive Flood Planning Tool with up-to-date information for helping to determine flood risk for homes and businesses and for designing development projects in accordance with floodplain codes.

The Flood Planning Tool is designed to provide residents, businesses, floodplain managers, insurance agents, developers, real estate agents, engineers, surveyors and local planners with an effective means to make informed decisions about the degree of flood risk for a specific area or property. Flood Planning Tool users have the ability to look at the current effective Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) layer as well as the preliminary FIRM layer. The preliminary layer shows Delaware areas that will be revised with more detailed information as a result of flood studies that have been conducted.

DNREC's new Flood Planning Tool website also displays FEMA's regulatory floodplain boundary via aerial photography. Another feature is DNREC's analysis of several special flood hazard areas that have not previously been studied in enough detail to establish a base flood elevation. The Flood Planning Tool can be found at http://maps.dnrec.delaware.gov/FloodPlanning/default.html.

Over the past 12 years, DNREC's Division of Watershed

Stewardship has partnered with FEMA to improve the accuracy of Flood Insurance Rate Maps created in the 1970's through a Cooperating Technical Partnership. DNREC completed floodplain mapping for all three Delaware counties in 2016. The improved flood risk maps incorporate the results of more than 330 miles of flood studies.

Property owners along Zone A floodplains have had a difficult time in the past at both understanding their flood risk and in getting properly-rated flood insurance. Base Flood Elevations and Advisory Flood Heights have now been determined in most of these areas, and a more accurate depiction of flood risk is now available. In the future engineers, developers and local officials will also be able to download HEC-RAS models (HEC-RAS is a widely-used computer program modeling the hydraulics of water flow).

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